

Reference:

CAB 133/244

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P.M.(W)(61) 3rd Meeting

RECORD OF A MEETING HELD ON PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S
YACHT "MONEY FITZ"
ON THURSDAY, 6TH APRIL, 1961,
AT 4.00 p.m.

PRESENT:

United Kingdom

The Rt. Hon. Harold Macmillan,
M.P.
The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Home
The Rt. Hon. Sir Norman Brook
Sir Frederick Moyer Miller
Sir Harold Casella
The Hon. P.E. Ramebotham
Mr. J.W. Russell
Mr. P.F. de Zulueta

United States

President Kennedy
Mr. Dean Rusk
Mr. David Bruce
Mr. Foy Kohler
Mr. Charles Bohlen
Mr. McGeorge Bundy
Mr. William C. Burdett, Jr.
Mr. John M. Steeves

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1. RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION(a) Nuclear Tests Conference

PRESIDENT KENNEDY said that he was trying to exercise restraint in relations with the Soviet Union. Over Laos and the Congo their behaviour had been comparatively moderate. On the other hand, the Geneva negotiations on nuclear tests were now going badly. The Russians were being particularly difficult about the composition of the Control Commission: it looked as if they might insist on a veto, and might carry this attitude over into the field of general disarmament. MR. BOHLEN said that the Russians in all world organisations control must be divided between representatives of what they called the three main groups in the world. LORD HOME observed that the three main groups talked a good deal about this principle in New York in October. It also looked as if he might now take the line that he would not sign a Tests Agreement unless it was part of a general disarmament plan. PRESIDENT KENNEDY said that, if no agreement were concluded, there would be strong pressure in the United States to resume testing. LORD HOME suggested that this could wait at any rate until the disarmament discussions had been resumed at the end of July. MR. RUSK said that in his view it would be very disadvantageous to lose the opportunity of concluding a Tests Agreement. If this were lost, the question of tests would fall back into the confusion of the general disarmament discussions and little further progress would be made with it. The United States and United Kingdom Governments ought to press hard in Geneva for the conclusion of an agreement. MR. MACMILLAN said that we should certainly not let the Russians break off the negotiations without having first made it clear what were the main points outstanding (e.g., the character of the control system, and the number of inspections). The public position of the West would then be strong, since the Russians would clearly appear to be resisting sensible propositions. Unless this was done, there was a danger that the nature of the disagreement and the extent of the Russians' intransigence would be obscure. PRESIDENT KENNEDY suggested that he and Mr. Macmillan might single out two or three questions which could be put to Mr. Khrushchev direct. He wondered whether the fall back position on the number of inspections — ~~20-25-30~~ — had yet been put forward. MR. MACMILLAN suggested that it would be a mistake to make this final offer too soon. He supposed that it would be difficult for the United States to avoid resuming tests if these negotiations failed.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY said that the United States would not wish to hold tests in the atmosphere. They might also find it difficult to hold tests in outer space. They would however wish to make underground tests with great precautions against fall-out. There would certainly be great pressure from the Joint Committee to resume such testing if negotiations broke down.

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MR. MACMILLAN said that there had been hints in the Soviet Press and at Geneva that the Russians would make the French position the excuse for breaking up the Conference. The French would have their next tests in mid-April.

LORD HOME explained that he had made the point to Monsieur Couve de Murville in Bangkok that the French really should not make tests at this time. The French difficulty was that, if they delayed for one month, they would have to wait for six months because the winds became unfavourable at the end of May, and were more likely to carry fall-out to populated areas.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY asked if it would be useful to make representations to the French about this. LORD HOME said that it would certainly do no harm to make representations; he had himself already spoken very strongly, but he believed that it would be useful if the United States Government added their voice. PRESIDENT KENNEDY said that he would tell the French what his view was. He would say that he did not want all the blame for a breakdown of the Geneva Conference to fall on France.

(b) General

PRESIDENT KENNEDY said that he was trying to do what he could to improve relations with the Russians in small ways. He had removed the restrictions on the import of arab-meat from the Soviet Union; the Soviet spy in the United Nations Secretariat had been released from prison; and a civil air agreement and a consular agreement had been offered.

MR. MACMILLAN said that it was difficult to gauge the present mood and intentions of Mr. Khrushchev. In 1959 he had certainly seemed to want a detente. It was not easy to guess why he had made so much fuss about the U.S. incident, although this had certainly been a blow to Russian pride. It was, however, the fact that, although he had made a great deal of noise in Paris and at the United Nations, he had not taken any hostile action. Indeed there was one view that the Summit Meeting had been a success because it adjourned the Berlin problem for a year. It now seemed that Mr. Khrushchev was having domestic difficulties in the Soviet Union; and this might mean that he was unable to maintain his policy of detente.

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LORD HOME suggested that the Soviet Government might also have been looking again at the consequences which a defence might bring in the shape of inroads into their closed society. They would be under great pressure not to allow this because it would sacrifice so great a military advantage. This might well be among the reasons for their reluctance to conclude an agreement on tests.

2. BERLIN

PRESIDENT KENNEDY wondered why the Russians had made no move on Berlin. Were they hesitating to move because they believed that the Western response would be stiff? If so, it would be a mistake to do anything which might cause them to change that view.

In the discussion which followed it was suggested, on the United States side, that Mr. Khrushchev had been surprised by the strength of the Western reaction to his Free City plan. Nevertheless, he had continued to affirm his intention to make a peace treaty with Eastern Germany, and he was now more or less committed to taking action this year. He probably did not think that Berlin was worth the risk of war, but he had to satisfy his satellites and to keep control of the world Communist movement at a time when the Chinese were challenging his leadership. In the Party Congress in October he might want to demonstrate that he could gain his ends by means short of war, and he could instance such cases as Laos or the Congo. It was possible that he needed a diplomatic success. It might be that the Russians were deterred from taking action on Berlin by the threat of a direct clash with the West. If so, and if we had no new bargaining position, we should consider how to put the prospect as bluntly as possible. The West was not in a position to negotiate successfully over Berlin. Perhaps the only thing which would affect the Soviet position would be a move by the Federal Government to recognise de facto the East German regime. This could lead to important changes in East-West relations in Europe. But the West Germans lacked imagination, and they were not prepared to take any risks over Berlin.

On the British side, it was pointed out that there had been a very long negotiation between Foreign Ministers, which broke down because of the impossibility of deciding what the position would be at the end of an interim period. It would be dangerous to go into discussions with no firm negotiating position. It would be worth considering the possibility of making a stand, not on the legalistic view of Western rights in Berlin, but on the general thesis that the West would defend the Berlin population. It might be possible to tolerate a Soviet Peace Treaty with East Germany and a joint guarantee of a Free City for all Berlin. Would it be a mistake to move to a treaty basis for our rights in Berlin, with all the dangers

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that this might bring of denunciation or violation? If the Russians ends their Peace Treaty, perhaps it might be possible to counter this with a plan for a Free City for all Berlin.

In conclusion, MR. MACMILLAN said that it would be desirable to examine the political plans. If Mr. Khrushchev called for negotiations, the West should have a public position. It would also be desirable to consider what would happen if he did sign his Treaty. PRESIDENT KENNEDY said that these questions should certainly be considered further. The suggestion made by Mr. Acheson for a revised military plan should also be looked at. MR. MACMILLAN added that there was always a danger that, after Dr. Adenauer, the Russians might attempt to bribe the West Germans by offering reunification in return for neutrality. If the Russians did not think that this was too dangerous for them, they might not be so anxious to settle the Berlin issue at the present moment.

3. BOLIVIA

PRESIDENT KENNEDY said that Bolivia was on the verge of being taken over by Communist elements favourable to Senor Castro. The mines were controlled by the left-wing trade unionists and the tin had to be brought out on a British-owned railway. This railway company was in great financial difficulty because of the actions of the Bolivian Government, which would not allow the company either to dismiss employees or to raise fares. If it ceased to function, however, the economy of the country would collapse. It would cost several million dollars to keep the railway going. Could the British Government do anything to help? He would be willing to send a member of the United States mission which had recently returned from Bolivia to discuss the matter in London.

MR. MACMILLAN said that he would look into this question.

4. AFGHANISTAN

MR. RUSK said that a dangerous situation seemed to be building up in Afghanistan. Troops were concentrating on the Pakistan border. The United States were being drawn into the dispute, as the Afghans complained that American arms supplied to Pakistan were being used against their tribesmen. Could the United Kingdom do anything to help?

LORD HOME said that this situation was probably no more serious than similar ones which had arisen from time to time in the last few years. The Afghans knew that they would get a hot reception if they crossed the frontier and the Pakistanis were very resolute. But he would try to obtain an appreciation of the situation from President Ayub.

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